History 388 DL1: Russia’s War on Ukraine in Historical Perspective 
(3 credits)

Fall 2022

On Zoom Synchronously Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00-4:15pm

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Office hours: See Blackboard Course Site for details on setting up Office Hour meetings with your instructors.

University Dates and Deadlines: Please visit GMU Fall Semester Calendar for up to date deadlines for registration, withdrawal, and so forth.

University Resources: The University has a wide array of resources available to assist students. Please visit GMU Resources and Support Services for a useful list of such resources.

About The Course Format
This is a fully-online synchronous course. The course will meet on Zoom in both meeting and webinar formats. Full details on all requirements, course calendar, etc. can be found through a combination of the Blackboard Course site and this syllabus.

Course Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate familiarity with important aspects of Ukrainian and Russian history necessary to understand the origins and nature of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Understand the complexity involved in answering the question of how the past informs our explanation of the present.

Demonstrate familiarity with some important cultural products of the people of Ukraine.
Practice critical reading and proper citation of primary and secondary sources, including texts, images, music, films, and websites, understanding the particular social, cultural, historical, and political context within which those sources were created.

**Course Description**

On February 24, 2022, drawing upon a variety of demonstrably false historical analogies, Vladimir Putin ordered a mass invasion of Ukraine. In this course, we will ask what history can tell us about this war. What is Ukraine and how did it come to be the object of Putin’s violent obsession? How do Ukraine’s history and culture help us understand the rise of this nation and the ferocity of their resistance? How does the history of Ukraine fit into the broader histories of European imperialism, nationalism, and post-colonialism? How can military history or the history of international law help us understand this war? What are the right historical analogies to help us understand this war? Through a series of readings, films, conversations, and guest specialists, students in the course will come to better understand Ukraine and the events that shook the world in 2022.

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

Access to MyMason and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class.

**Two Zoom Links for Synchronous Sessions**

The course will meet in two Zoom formats. Starting September 12, the public will be allowed to be part of our online course space, as we receive visits and lectures from a series of special guests. (Feel free to invite family and friends.) Since those will be public sessions, we will hold those class sessions in the Zoom webinar format to protect against Zoom bombers and to protect your privacy. As such, you must register for the Zoom webinar.

[Register for Public Zoom Sessions](#)

Please note that although you will not be able to see who else is on the Zoom webinar, your instructors will be able to see if you have logged on and they will pay attention to your attendance. You are expected to attend all public sessions, as you are assigned to write a response to them.
For all sessions other than those Mondays starting on September 12, we will be meeting in a regular Zoom meeting session, so we can more easily see and interact with one another. For those session, a registration is not required. A link to the Zoom Sessions is available via the Course Menu on the Blackboard Course. In the event Blackboard is down, save this link to use to join our Synchronous Sessions. Students are asked not to share the link beyond our course.

Link for Non-Public Zoom Sessions

**Technology Requirements**
Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at MyMason. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher.

Activities and assignments in this course will also regularly use web-conferencing software (Zoom and possibly Blackboard Collaborate). In addition to the requirements above, students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone. In an emergency, students can connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

**Course Schedule**
The full course schedule is available via the Course Calendar menu on the Blackboard site.

**Special Schedule Note:** Although Mason is not having class on Monday, October 10, it is not a university holiday and the public session with a lecture from Marci Shore of Yale University will still happen on that day at a special 3:30 start time. If you cannot attend live, you will be expected to
watch a recording of the session. As a makeup, we will not be having a Tuesday class session that week as will your other Monday classes, so you are advised to consider using our normal class meeting time to view the video recording.

**Required Books and Readings**

The first two are available at the GMU Bookstore or from your favorite online seller. The third is not being distributed in the U.S. in print form. You can pre-order the book from Amazon UK at the link attached to the book’s title below, as it will be released on September 1. Order early, as we will be reading the book in mid-October and you want to have it available.


Many other short reading assignments will be required as well, but all of those will be made available to students either through the GMU Library Catalog, online, or directly via the professor. More details of reading assignments can be found on the Course Calendar or under the **Readings** tab of the Blackboard Course site. Please note that the Course Calendar does not currently include all readings assigned in the course. Given the ongoing nature of the war, public writing continues at a fast pace, and Professor Barnes wants to be able to assign the best and most recent material. Once the reading assignments for a week appears on the **Readings** page, no additional assignments will be added for that week.

**Class Participation**

The nature of this class requires your active participation—whether on Discussion Boards or in class. We are in this together. We will learn from one another. Active participation is required. Participation does not necessarily mean speaking frequently in our class sessions. You can show you are participating actively by attending class regularly, turning on your cameras in the non-public class sessions, sharing ideas and thoughts via the text chat function, and engaging extensively on the Discussion Boards. In short, there are numerous ways to participate actively, but if you are not present, you
cannot actively participate. My expectation is that everyone should be easily be able to earn full credit for Class Participation, which will count for 75 points of 7.5% of the final grade.

**Written Assignments Description**

**Discussion Board Posts:** Each week starting with week 2, students will be required to write substantive posts on a course Discussion Board as well as read and reply to posts written by other students in your assigned Discussion Group. Beginning with week 4, students will also be required to submit a question for the scheduled Monday public speaker on the Discussion Board no later than noon on Mondays. Pay attention to the instructions and deadlines for each week’s Discussion Board, as they may change over the course of the semester. You can find the *Discussion Boards* through that page on the Blackboard Course site tab.

Each weekly Discussion Board is worth a total of 15 points, for a total of 225 points or 22.5% of the final grade for the course. These posts will be graded in accord with the timeliness of their submission and the quality of the comments and questions. Monday questions starting in week 4 will not be accepted for credit after the Monday noon deadline.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON DISCUSSION BOARD AND SYNCHRONOUS SESSION CHAT NETIQUETTE** This war is a sensitive and emotional topic. George Mason University is a place for civil debate, exchange of ideas, learning, and mutual respect. Discussion Boards, Class discussions, and the Chat function on our non-public Zoom Sessions are great opportunities to engage in the intellectual life of the university with your fellow students, professor, and TA as we all try to work through this complex event. However, this must be done in an atmosphere of openness, respect, and civility. Please read these useful suggestions on being productive contributors to the class’s intellectual community. Pay particular attention when you are responding to the ideas of others. Make sure you have understood what they have said, keeping in mind that it can be easy when you are not in a face-to-face environment to take something the wrong way. Be respectful and non-confrontational keeping in mind that your goals are rooted not in
winning an argument but in keeping the conversation going. **Netiquette Tips for Online Discussions**

**Essays:** You will be asked to complete five essays—the first four based on readings in the course and the final one based on your own reflections about what you’ve learned during the semester. The full details of each assignment will appear under the **Writing** tab on the Blackboard Course site and their due dates can be found there and in the Course Calendar.

A separate grading rubric will be provided for each essay. Each Essay is worth 100 points for a total of 500 points or 50% of the final course grade.

**Film Responses:** You will have ten film assignments in this course—some are entire films, some are episodes of television shows/miniseries. You will respond to these films with a short writing assignment. Complete information on how to access the films and descriptions of the required written response assignment can be found under the **Films** tab on the Blackboard Course site and their due dates can be found there and in the Course Calendar.

Each Film Response is worth 20 points for a total of 200 points or 20% of the final course grade.

**Extra Credit** (maximum 50 points) Students may earn up to 50 points of 5% on their final grade through writing essays based on a variety of external online events related to the Russia’s war on Ukraine over the course of the semester. Each such event/essay will be worth 10 points. More details may be found under the **Extra Credit Opportunities** tab on the Blackboard Course Menu.

**Grading Scale**

Course grades are based on a final percentage score earned through the weighting of assignments as noted above. The “weighted total” category on Blackboard’s grade center will reflect this final score. Scores are not rounded.

- 990-1000 A+
- 930-989 A
- 900-929% A-
- 870-899 B+
- 830-869 B
Course Policies

Course Materials and Student Privacy:

An important note on privacy and the public sessions. Please note that the public sessions of the course on Mondays starting on September 12 will be held in the Zoom webinar format. As a result, none of your private information will be available to anyone other than the professor, the T.A., and the guest speaker. Questions that you are required to ask to the speaker via the Discussion Board may be used in the public session. **If you would not like your name used if your question is asked in the public session, please let Professor Barnes and Jessica Dauterive know by Monday, September 12, at noon.**

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course sites are private to this class and are not to be shared publicly or with anyone not enrolled in this class. Some kinds of participation in online study sites violate the Mason Honor code: these include accessing exam or quiz questions for this class; accessing exam, quiz, or assignment answers for this class; uploading of any of the instructor’s materials or exams; and uploading any of your own answers or finished work. Always consult your syllabus and your professor before using these sites.

**By federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.**

Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class.

Live video conference meetings other than the public Zoom webinar sessions that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must
be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class.

Some/All of our private Zoom meetings in this class will be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard [or other secure site] and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.

The public Zoom webinar sessions will be recorded and potentially shared further publicly via YouTube or in some other fashion. No student identifying information will be included in those recordings other than the possible mention of a student’s name when asking that student’s question. To opt out of having your name used, please contact Professor Barnes or Jessica Dauterive by Monday, September 12 at noon.

**Academic Integrity:**

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using the appropriate format for this class. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

*Please note that submission of film responses without watching the films by way of paraphrasing published film reviews, Wikipedia or IMDB entries, or some other narrative recounting of the film constitutes plagiarism and cheating.*
Please note that for cases of plagiarism or cheating, I will refer these cases to the GMU Honor Committee with a recommendation that the student fail the course.

**Disability Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS)](http://ds.gmu.edu/) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://ds.gmu.edu/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

**Diversity Statement:**

In this course, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

**Late Assignments:**

All assignments must be turned in on the due date given in the Course Calendar and on Blackboard. Fully recognizing the potential for health and/or personal circumstances to intervene in the midst of a pandemic that is still not over, I will work with students if it becomes necessary to turn in an assignment late if you contact me prior to the stated deadline so that we may reach an agreement on a revised schedule. However, absent truly exceptional circumstances, Speaker questions posted to the Discussion
Board will not be accepted late, and other Discussion Board posts and replies will not be accepted after the 11:59pm on the Sunday immediately following the date they are due, as your contributions to the Discussion Board are critical not only for your own but for your fellow students’ learning.

Instructor-Student Communication:

Please see the Meet and Contact Your Instructors page on Blackboard for communication policies.